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URBAN DISTRICT OF CONSETT.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1925.**

JOHN G. WALKER,

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

CONSETT :

ANDREW S COATES, PRINTER AND STATIONER, MIDDLE STREET.

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To the Chairman and Members of the Consett Urban

District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in submitting my first Annual Report. I commenced my duties here on Sept. 1st, 1925, so the greater part of the work embodied in this Report was performed under the supervision of my predecessor, Dr. Murray Taylor.

There has been a continued fall in the Birth-rate throughout the Country. The rate for England and Wales was 18·3 per thousand, that for the Consett Urban District is 26·6 per thousand, so is well above the average.

The Death-rate, 13·6 per thousand, whilst the lowest recorded for several years is above the average of 12·2 per thousand for England and Wales, but whereas the average rate for England and Wales remains the same as in the previous year, that for your District shows an improvement from 14·4 to 13·6.

The Infant Mortality Rate for Consett is not satisfactory, the decline during the previous four years having been abruptly arrested and a sharp rise substituted. The rate for Consett is 114·9 deaths per 1000 births compared with the average of 75 for England and Wales. Obviously there is scope for Preventative Medicine in this respect.

Housing conditions, though steadily improving still require great efforts if all overcrowded and insanitary conditions are to be dealt with.

It affords me great pleasure to record the courteous assistance of all members of your staff with whom I have come in contact.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

JOHN G. WALKER,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

SUMMARY OF GENERAL AND VITAL STATISTICS.

Area in Acres	...	...	...	...	1503
Population (Census 1921)	...	...	...	...	12155
No. of Inhabited Houses, 1921	...	...	...	...	2454
No. of Inhabited Houses, 1925	...	...	...	...	2652
No. of Families or separate occupiers, 1921	...	...	...	...	2754
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£56362
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	...	£235
Population est. by Registrar General, 1925	...	...	...	...	13120
Density of Population per acre	...	...	...	...	8.7
Births during 1925	...	348.	Birth-rate	...	26.6
Deaths during 1925	...	179.	Death-rate	...	13.6
Infant Mortality Rate	...	...	...	...	114.9
Tuberculosis Death-rate—					
Pulmonary	...	0.6	Non-Pulmonary	...	0.15

Your District was constituted a Local Board Division in 1865, with an area of 1,005 acres and a population of about 7,000. 498 acres were added to this area following the Public Enquiry of 1919. The added area including the main Sewage Works, has largely been developed as a new housing estate, known as the Grove area.

Generally the subsoil consists of clay overlying coal measures. The town is situated in a healthy but exposed position, nearly 900 feet above sea level. The land slopes to the Derwent and Wear Valleys, affording good natural drainage. The Benfieldside Urban District is co-terminus on the North-West and the Lanchester Rural District bounds the Southern portion of the District.

The chief industries in the Area are iron and steel smelting, coal mining, brick making, and in recent years a new Bye Product plant has been built by the Consett Iron Company. The whole of the huge iron and steel works has undergone complete reconstruction since the war, but during the year under review trade depression and labour disputes have been unprecedented. The amounts paid out in Poor Law Relief reached a very high figure as follows :—

Poor Law Relief paid in Consett in 1925.

<i>Quarter ending.</i>		<i>Ordinary.</i>		<i>Unemployment.</i>
March 31st	...	662	6 11	38 2 8
June 30th	...	776	5 6	67 2 1
Sept. 30th	...	1001	0 1	4525 19 11
Dec. 31st	...	1099	3 8	6111 18 8
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		£3538 16 2		£10713 3 4

VITAL STATISTICS.

(a) POPULATION.—The estimated population of the Consett Urban District by the Registrar General at mid-year, 1925, was 13120. This figure is taken as a basis for calculation. It is based on the “adjusted” population for 1921 after allowing for the rate of natural increase, *i.e.* excess of births over deaths, and migration as ascertained from various sources.

(b) BIRTHS.—BIRTH-RATE. The number of births recorded during the year was 348. This is equivalent to a birth-rate of 26·6 per 1000 of the population. The average rate for England and Wales for the same period is 18·3, and for Durham County 23·9.

The Annual rates for the last five years are shown in the following table :—

1921	...	...	31·5
1922	...	...	25·5
1923	...	...	33·3
1924	...	...	28·14
1925	...	...	26·6

DISTRIBUTION (Sexes; Legitimacy).

BIRTHS.			Males.	Females.	Total.
Legitimate	...	...	157	182	339
Illegitimate	...	...	4	5	9
Total	...	...	161	187	348

The proportion of male to female births was 1000 to 1161.

The percentage of illegitimate births was 2·5 compared with 5·4 for 1921, 3·4 for 1922, 3·1 for 1923, and 3·3 for 1924.

There has been a continuous decline in the birth-rate throughout the country for the last 50 years. Consett still shows a comparatively high rate compared with the rest of the country.

(c) DEATHS.—179 deaths occurred during the year giving a death-rate 13·6 per 1000 of the population. The death-rate for England and Wales for the same period was 12·2, and that for Durham County 12·6.

The death-rates for the last five years in Consett were :—

1921	...	...	16·1
1922	...	...	15·4
1923	...	...	13·7
1924	...	...	14·4
1925	...	...	13·6

The rate 13·6 compared with that of 11·2 for 157 small towns is unfavourable, but is to some extent accounted for by the excessive infantile mortality 114·9 compared with 74 per thousand in the towns referred to.

CAUSES OF DEATH.—These are shown in the following table.

40 of the recorded deaths were infants under one year of age. This is about 22·3 per cent. of the total deaths. Tuberculosis caused 10 deaths or about 5·6 per cent. of the total. Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and other respiratory diseases caused 43 deaths or about 23·9 per cent. of the total. Cancer caused 5 deaths compared with 15 in 1924. 90 of the total deaths occurred in males and 89 in females.

CAUSES OF DEATH.				MALES.	FEMALES.
All Causes	...	...	...	90	89
Measles	...	...	...	2	1
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	0	1
Diphtheria	...	...	...	0	2
Influenza	...	...	...	7	3
Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	...	1	2
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	3	5
Other Tubercular Diseases	...	...	...	1	1
Cancer, Malignant Disease	...	...	...	4	1
Diabetes	...	...	...	1	1
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	...	...	...	5	7
Heart Disease	...	...	...	5	6
Arterio-Sclerosis	...	...	...	7	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	3	10
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	13	14
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	2	1
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	...	...	...	1	1
Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years)	...	...	...	2	4
Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	1	1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	...	...	...	2	4
Puerperal Sepsis	...	...	...	0	1
Other Diseases of Pregnancy	...	...	...	0	1
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, etc.	...	...	...	6	7
Suicide	...	...	...	1	0
Other Deaths from Violence	...	...	...	6	2
Other Defined Diseases	...	...	...	15	12
Cause Ill-defined or Unknown	...	...	...	2	0

DEATHS FROM PRINCIPAL EPIDEMIC DISEASES.—The seven principal epidemic diseases caused 12 deaths as follows :—

Measles	...	...	...	...	3
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	0
Diarrhoea and enteritis (under 2 years)	...	...	...	...	6
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	2
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	1
"Fever" (Enteric, typhus, simple continued)	...	...	...	...	0
Smallpox	...	...	...	...	0

This corresponds to a Zymotic Death-rate of 0·91 per 1000 of the population, compared with the average rate of 1·03 for the County of Durham.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

40 deaths occurred in infants under one year of age during 1925. This gives an infant mortality rate of 114·9 deaths per 1000 births, compared with 75 for England and Wales and 99 for the County of Durham. The rates in Consett for the last five years are as follows :—

1921	...	...	143
1922	...	...	121
1923	...	...	95·4
1924	...	...	89·4
1925	...	...	114·9

After the encouraging progressive reduction in the infantile mortality rate during the last few years this is an unfortunate figure to record. Compared with the average rates for the Country generally or with the County of Durham it is far from satisfactory. The fact that 13 deaths are recorded as due to congenital debility, malformation, or premature birth, points to the provision of well-organised ante-natal services, a gradually increasing factor in the County Scheme of Maternity and Child-Welfare Work.

There still remains an appalling amount of ignorance and carelessness on the part of some mothers in regard to correct feeding of infants. Other factors contributing to this high rate are the privations consequent upon unemployment, and unhealthy and overcrowded dwellings. In this latter connection I would urge that the utmost co-operation be given by the District Council in order to assist the County Health Authority in cases of gross overcrowding.

CAUSES OF SICKNESS.—During the five years period under review the outstanding feature has been the continued industrial depression which commencing with the unfortunate coal strike in 1921 has more or less continued up to the present time. This continued

period of depression, unemployment and industrial disputes is unfavourable from the Public Health as from other points of view. Privation and mal-nutrition follow as a consequence and these in turn are directly conducive to high infant mortality rates, and a lowering of resistance to disease below that of the normal individual.

Influenza appears to have been the only notable disease present during the period under review having appeared in the early months of each year. It has fortunately been of a mild type but never-the-less with a large attack rate.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Summary of Hospitals available for Treatment of Patients resident in the Consett Urban District.

1. **TUBERCULOSIS.**—Sanatoria are provided in various parts of the County by the County Council.

2. **MATERNITY.**—The Richard Murray Hospital, Blackhill has 17 beds available for obstretic cases. These are provided by the County Council.

3. **CHILDREN.**—The Richard Murray Hospital, Blackhill, and the Children's Hospital, Newcastle-on-Tyne are available for Consett cases.

4. **FEVER.**—Three Isolation Hospitals for cases of Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Typhoid Fever, etc., are available. These are provided by the Lanchester Joint Hospital Board, the Consett U.D.C. being one of the Constituent Authorities. These are all situated outside your Area but within easy reach by Motor Ambulance. They are

Langley Park Hospital.	}	Situating in the Area of the Lanchester
Villa Real Hospital.	}	R. D. C.

Tanfield Hospital. Situating in the Area of the Tanfield U.D.C.

5. **SMALLPOX** —A Smallpox Isolation Hospital is provided by the above Joint Board—Maiden Law Smallpox Hospital, Lanchester.

6. **OTHER HOSPITALS** available for the District are—

(a) **THE CONSETT IRON COMPANY'S INFIRMARY** which provides treatment for cases of accident occurring in their Collieries or Steel-Works.

(b) **THE ROYAL VICTORIA INFIRMARY**, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

(c) **THE LANCHESTER UNION HOSPITAL** which fulfils the needs of the Poor Law Hospital.

(d) **THE RICHARD MURRAY HOSPITAL**, Blackhill, is also available for Consett residents.

There are no institutions provided for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants, or homeless children within the Area.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.—Infectious cases are dealt with by the motor ambulance service of the Lanchester Joint Hospital Board, one ambulance being reserved specially for cases of Smallpox.

Accidents and non-infectious cases are dealt with by the St. John's Ambulance Association.

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

A MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRE is provided by the County Council at Wetheral House, Consett. It is well attended and doing much useful work in combating the high infant mortality rate.

TUBERCULOSIS DISPENSARY.—One Dispensary is provided by the County Council in Station Road. Excellent preventative and curative work is performed and the co-operation of their District Health Visitors, particularly with regard to overcrowding in the homes of Tubercular patients, is much appreciated in this department. It is a matter of regret that all the cases cannot be relieved owing to the scarcity of houses. To ensure the success of these County Schemes it is essential that the Local Authority co-operate to their utmost ability especially in regard to cases of overcrowding.

VENEREAL DISEASES.—Treatment Centres available for this Area are provided under the County Council's Scheme at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and at Durham.

SCHOOL CLINICS are provided by the County Council in Medomsley Road, where treatment of Minor Ailments is carried out. Provision is made there for Dental Treatment and also for sight-testing. Much useful work is done for the health of the School Children of the District.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY.

JOHN G. WALKER, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health (whole-time) for the joint Areas of the Cossett U.D.C. and Lanchester R.D.C.

FRED STRINGFELLOW, A.R.S.I., Sanitary, Meat and Food Inspector.

MISS LOUGHLAN, District Health Visitor, appointed and paid by the County Council.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.—The Local Branch of the Queen Victoria Jubilee and Voluntary Nursing Association, which has been in existence for over 25 years, is available for the treatment of Medical and Surgical cases. The two Nurses attached to it are regularly employed at the homes of the people and perform excellent services of great benefit to the Community. I regret to record that the financial position of the Association is a source of great anxiety, and it would be a great loss to the District if this good work is in any way curtailed because of lack of funds.

THE HEALTH VISITORS employed under and paid by the County Council have specific duties in home visiting in connection with the various County Public Health Schemes.

ADOPTIVE ACTS.—The following Adoptive Acts are in force in the District:—

Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889	...	Adopted 1904
Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act, 1890	...	„ 1923
Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act 1890, Part 3	„	1904
Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act, 1907	Adopted 1910 & 1914	
Part 2, Sections 15 to 25 and 27 to 33. Part 3, Sections 34 to 42 and 44 to 51. Parts 4, 5, and 6. Part 7, Sections 79 to 81. Part 8 and Part 10, Section 95.		

BYE-LAWS.—Slaughter Houses, 1899 ; Prevention of Nuisances, 1889 ; Common Lodging Houses, 1899 ; Houses let in Lodging, 1899 ; Offensive Trades, 1913 ; Removal of Offensive Matters, 1899 ; Dairies, Cowsheds & Milkshops, 1909 ; New Streets & Buildings, revised 1925.

ROADS.—Your Council continue the policy of tar-macadamising streets and tar spraying of road surfaces is carried out during the Summer months. There are very few back streets still to make up.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER.—The water supply to your Council's Area is under the control of the Durham County Water Board, who took over the properties of the private Water Company in 1920. The water comes from the Uplands of the Waskerley Moors and has been plentiful and of good quality. A constant supply is maintained. Improvements of an extensive nature have been carried out by the Board in recent years with a view to augmenting the supplies. Apart from about 6 houses the whole of the properties in the Area are connected up to the water mains.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.—Complaints as to pollution of Rivers and Streams have been absent except for the effluent from the Bye Product Works on the Fell. Complaint was made to the Company with reference to this, and as a result Settling Tanks have been constructed from which is extracted the waste oils and boiler sediments. Since the provision of these Tanks the Effluent from these works has been satisfactory.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—Your District is well provided with sewers on the combined system, and all properties are connected, with the exception of about 12 outlying dwellings in the Allansford, Stanefordham, and Crookhall Area. The South East portion of the District drains into the Crookhall Sewage Works which consist of settling tanks and double contact filters. These works receive daily attention and the County Inspector is invariably satisfied with their condition, and with the effluent, which discharges into a burn. The main portion of the sewage is carried to your Council's Irrigation Farm at Stanefordham. Your Sewage Farm Manager has complete control of the works and resides at the Farm. The works have regular attention and the effluent finally passes to the River Derwent.

A number of manholes have been provided on the various sewers for access purposes. A portion of the sewer in Plane Street collapsed owing to subsidence but damage from this cause is rare. Owing to new properties being erected, with water closets, baths and new lengths of roadway, the volume of sewage to the Stanefordham Works has greatly increased during the past 5 years.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—235 new water closets were installed during the year, this number including 41 privy conversions. The present closet accommodation in your Council's Area is as follows :—

Water Closets	...	2008
Ash Closets ...	...	624
Ashpit Privies	...	316
Pail Closets ...	...	6

For some years your Council has aimed at definitely reducing the conservancy system, and during the past 5 years the average annual conversion rate has been nearly 60. The whole of the old insanitary privies with open ashpits were first abolished under Sect. 36 of the Public Health Act 1875, and the policy of your Council in recent years is to assist owners to convert privies and ash closets to water closets, by providing the necessary drainage, and in addition to contribute £2 10s. 0d. towards the cost of each conversion. In normal times owners have responded well, and since the year 1913 the privy conversions number 633. The work came practically to a standstill during the war period and recently the serious industrial depression in the Area coupled with high rates has made it very difficult for owners to effect alterations to property. There are yet 946 privies and ash closets in your Area, but 110 of these are installed in property which will in all probability be demolished as opportunity occurs, leaving a balance of 836 definitely to convert. In the closely built and populous centre around the John Street area demolition has effected good results, a number of privies having been swept away. Many of the remaining unfit houses in this area have the water carriage system installed.

SCAVENGING.—This work is carried out by your Council's own staff under the direct control of your Inspector. Three motors fitted with covered bodies are used, and each squad of men employed is responsible for a particular district. A horse and cart is partly employed on short leads and for premises difficult of access. The refuse is used for levelling up uneven land, which is later covered with soil and the surface brought back to cultivation. Apart from short periods when heavy snowfall has made it impossible for transport to travel, complaints from occupiers are very rarely received. In summer, privies and ash closets are cleansed prior to 9 a.m. During the past 5 years 280 movable ash bins have been substituted for fixed receptacles. A total of 1706 movable ash bins are now in use and these are cleared weekly and a number twice weekly. The approximate tonnage of refuse collected during the year under review was 7,770 tons or an average of 2 tons 12 cwt. per house per annum. This is a high average and no doubt free coal and the number of premises housing two or more families, are helping to swell this figure.

**SUMMARY OF WORK DONE IN SANITARY INSPECTOR'S
DEPARTMENT, YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1925.**

	Informal Notices written by Inspector.	Formal Notices by Order of Local Authority.	Number of Nuisances Abated after Notice.
Dwelling Houses and Schools—			
Foul Conditions	5	0	5
Structural Defects	133	0	239
Overcrowding	129	0	115
Lodging Houses	5	0	13
Dairies and Milkshops	0	0	0
Cowsheds	1	0	0
Bake Houses	2	0	2
Slaughter Houses	19	0	19
Ashpits and Privies	122	2	110
Deposits of Refuse or Manure	12	0	12
Water Closets	21	0	18
Defective Yard Paving	10	0	6
House Drainage—			
Defective Traps	2	0	2
No Disconnection from Sewer	1	0	1
Other Faults	94	0	105
Water Supply	2	0	6
Animals improperly kept	2	0	1
Smoke Nuisances	0	0	0
Other Nuisances	29	0	19
Total	589	2	673

In 11 cases defective drainage has been taken up and reconstructed, and 264 private drainage inspections have been made.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.—No action has been taken or deemed necessary with regard to smoke abatement during the year.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BYELAWS OR REGULATIONS.—There is one Common Lodging House in the District and this is kept in a clean and sanitary condition. Recently the premises have not been more than half occupied, owing no doubt to industrial conditions. Your Council's Hostel in Trafalgar Street has accommodation for 44 men. The premises are in good condition and water closets, baths and electric light are provided. During the year this Hostel has been rarely full but no doubt with industry becoming more settled, full use will be made of the premises. The price charged is 10d. per night, or 5s. 6d. per week. Consett Iron Company provide a Hostel in Berry Edge Road for use of workmen employed at the works. There is excellent accommodation, and when full this Hostel will house 140 men. Dining hall, separate cubicles, recreation room, and all necessary conveniences are provided.

There are no Offensive Trades, and no underground sleeping rooms in your Council's Area.

2. INSPECTION OF FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, & WORKPLACES.

Premises.		Inspections.	Written Notices.	Occupiers Prosecuted.
Factories	...	25	5	nil
Workshops	...	25	8	nil
Workplaces	...	8	3	nil
Total	...	58	16	nil

2. DEFECTS FOUND IN FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, & WORKPLACES.

				Number of Defects.			Prosecutions.
				Found.	Remedied.	Referred to H.M. Inspector.	
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts ...				nil	nil	nil	nil
Want of Cleanliness ...				1	1	nil	nil
Want of Ventilation ...				4	3	nil	nil
Overcrowding ...				nil	nil	nil	nil
Want of Drainage of Floors ...				1	1	nil	nil
Other Nuisances ...				7	7	nil	nil
Sanitary Accommodation	{	Insufficient ...	...	2	2	nil	nil
		Unsuitable or Defective...	...	3	3	nil	nil
		Not Separate for Sexes ...	...	2	2	nil	nil
Total ...				20	19	nil	nil

REGISTERED WORKSHOPS in your Council's District are as follows :—Bakers, 7 ; Boot Repairers, 8 ; Confectioners, 1 ; Cycle Repairers, 1 ; Dressmaking and Millinery, 10 ; Joiners and Undertakers, 11 ; Motor Repairers, 4 ; Plumbers, 6 ; Saddlery, 2 ; Tailors, 5 ; Watch Repairers, 3 ; Total, 58.

SCHOOLS.—There are 4 schools in your Council's Area and all are provided with closets on the water carriage system. Public water supply is available in all cases. The Roman Catholic Schools in Thomas Street are being replaced by new schools on land in Stanley Street. During the year under review a new school was completed for Seniors and Advanced Classes to accommodate 368 children. Part of the old school is being used for Infants, but plans have been prepared for a new Infants' School on the new site. The three other schools in the Area are in good structural condition. The whole of the schools are disinfected during Xmas and Summer vacations. On several occasions various schools have been disinfected specifically for Smallpox and Scarlet Fever.

HOUSING.

GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS.—There is still a considerable shortage of houses, as is evidenced by the number of applications received, and from inspections of properties which are housing two or even three families. From 1919 to the end of 1925 your Council has built 357 houses and private enterprise has provided 83 houses, a total of 440. A further hundred houses are in course of erection by your Council on the Grove Farm Estate. The population of the District at the 1921 Census was 12,155 and the population given by the Registrar General for 1925 was 13,120.

OVERCROWDING.—At the end of 1924 your Inspector made a survey of 1310 houses in order to ascertain to what extent overcrowding existed. The following shows the comparison as compared with 10 years previously on houses having from one to five rooms.

Year.	Houses Inspected.	Number of Occupants.	Houses Overcrowded.	Over-crowded Occupants.	8 or more Occupants.	10 or more Occupants.
1914	1451	6867	209	1515	81	13
1924	1310	7144	377	2830	155	71

The chief cause of the overcrowding is due to the absolute cessation of cottage building by the private builder. The average number of houses built per year in Consett for the 5 years before the war was 41. From January 1915 to December 1919 only 9 houses were erected so that ordinary arrears of building in this period account for 200 houses. Overcrowding figures are also increased owing to the very limited accommodation of many of the existing houses. Very active steps have been taken by your Council during the year under review, and it

is pleasing to know that 115 definite cases of overcrowding were relieved as a result. Quite half of these were cases of man, wife, and one, two, or more children, living and sleeping in one room, and the remainder were chiefly from cottages of 2 rooms.

FITNESS OF HOUSES,—There are 2,652 houses in the District, the great majority of which are working class dwellings. Apart from the area designated “Unhealthy” the general standard is good. The chief defects noted in Unfit houses are dampness, defective floors, insufficient light and ventilation, general dilapidation. In the case of over 300 houses these conditions are simply a question of property which would have been demolished except for the abnormal demand for houses experienced in recent years.

GENERAL ACTION AS REGARDS UNFIT HOUSES.—Trade conditions have seriously affected the small property owner who often has the utmost difficulty in collecting the rent and rates. All improvements to properties are arranged by negotiations with the owners. As repairs are effected the tenants are asked to co-operate in keeping the property in good condition and in the case of water closet conversions the various fittings are explained by your Inspector. The Consett Iron Company are the largest house owners in your Council’s Area, and they employ their own staff of men on property repairs. In the majority of cases tenants respond to improved sanitary conditions, but there are unfortunately numbers of very careless and dirty tenants who are very difficult to deal with, and who need constant supervision. There are practically no back to back houses in the Area

Your Housing Committee has adopted a useful method in a form of lecture to selected tenants for new houses. The heads of the various families are asked to attend before the Housing Committee when they are told the objects of the provision of better houses, with increased lighting and ventilation, sanitary fittings of the best type, and gardens at their door. They are urged to back up the Council in their endeavour to provide clean and healthy houses and surroundings.

All new properties are provided with water closets and ash bins, and water mains and gas mains are available practically throughout the Area.

UNHEALTHY AREAS.—Excellent progress has been made in the area covered by Unfit Houses in the congested locality between Front Street and Newmarket Street. The old 2 roomed insanitary dwellings known as the Company Rows have been demolished with the exception of a few cottages, and these are being dealt with. Originally there were 123 of these dwellings, the total number of families being 132 and individuals 638, or nearly 5·2 persons per house. 78 of the cottages were overcrowded on the basis of 2 persons per room. In addition several unfit houses in Victoria Street and Sand Street have been demolished. The whole of the people were re-housed and provided with more accommodation for sleeping, the proper separation of sexes, improved water supply, and closet accommodation.

The bold policy adopted by your Council of sweeping away these insanitary dwellings is bound to have good results in the better health and brighter life provided for the many overcrowded families. There is yet much to be done, as there are still many Unfit Houses remaining, and a further section of this area has been the subject of a special report which is being considered by your Council.

BYELAWS RELATING TO HOUSES LET IN LODGINGS AND TENTS AND VANS AND SHEDS.—There is really only one definite case of a house let in lodgings and this was formerly a Common Lodging House, in Harvey Street. The house is now occupied by 7 separate families who were in desperate need of accommodation. Fortunately none of these are big families, and in several of the rooms an excellent standard of cleanliness is observed.

The practice of living in Vans and Sheds has not grown, there being at the present time 6 families so housed in your Council's Area. In most cases land has been purchased by the occupier, and all are supplied with water and water closets. Old railway coaches, wood sheds, and vans are used as kitchens and for sleeping, and except

perhaps for appearances there is really little to complain about. It is probable that were it not for these temporary shelters the residents would simply have to live under worse conditions, in houses already having at least one family in occupation. The most difficult cases are the casual caravan people who dump down for a period with neither closet accommodation or water, and several of these cases have been dealt with. Generally where there is a man, wife, and children living in such conditions they express a desire to rent a house providing such rent is within their means.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.—There are 28 retail purveyors of milk on the register, and except in two cases the whole of the milk is produced in surrounding districts and brought into your Council's Area daily for sale. A fair quantity of milk is supplied in sealed bottles, but in no case is milk supplied under any special designation. There are only two cowsheds in the Area one of which is owned by your Council. Both these places are in good structural condition, The 3 milkshops in the Area are well kept. No action was taken during the year as to Tuberculous milk or Tuberculous cattle.

MEAT.—As far as possible meat inspection is carried out at the time of slaughter. The bulk of slaughtering in your Council's Area is carried out on Mondays and Tuesdays with occasional slaughtering up to Friday. No arrangements have been made for the marking of meat under the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924. Practically the whole of the Butchers have arranged regular slaughtering hours. A number of alterations had to be carried out by owners to comply with the new regulations chiefly with a view to providing separate accommodation for the preparation of articles of food. The shops in your Council's Area are well kept, and in every case meat is kept behind closed windows. Stores for food are visited at irregular intervals and are cleanly kept. The various vehicles carrying meat about the Area are of good type. There are at present 10 private Slaughter Houses in the Area as follows :—

		1920.	In January 1925.	In December 1925.
Registered	...	nil	nil	nil
Licenced	...	9	10	10
		9	10	10

During the year under review the following meat and food was destroyed owing to same being diseased or otherwise unfit for human consumption :—

English Beef	...	2184 lbs.
Pork	... ..	280 „
Imported Meat	...	579 „
		<hr/>
Total		3043 lbs
Livers	... ..	56
Stomachs	... ..	6
Lungs	... ..	11
Hearts	... ..	6
Heads	... ..	7

In addition 319 Tins of Fish, Fruit, and various foods were destroyed.

BAKEHOUSES.—There are 7 bakehouses in your Council's Area and a good standard of cleanliness is observed. The sanitary arrangements are satisfactory and with the exception of one bakery, proper washup sinks are provided, giving the employees every facility for observing personal cleanliness. None of these places are underground.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

During the year 1925, 183 cases of Infectious Disease (exclusive of tuberculosis) were notified. This is a great increase on the figures for the previous years under review which averaged 50 cases per year. It is accounted for partly by the addition of Chickenpox to the list of notifiable diseases, as a result of the appearance of Smallpox, and partly by the great increase in the prevalence of Scarlet Fever, 83 cases of that disease having occurred—four times as many as the average number occurring in the preceeding four years. Diphtheria was also present to a greater extent than usual.

Smallpox first appeared during the year 1925 in Consett after a long period of freedom, and 9 cases occurred during the year under review. The usual steps as regards isolation of infected persons, vaccination and re-vaccination of contacts, supervision of contacts for a period of 16 days combined with the disinfection of house clothing and bedding, proved up to the end of the year effective in limiting the spread of infection. Great credit is due to the careful work of your Sanitary Inspector in this connection who has spared neither time nor effort to limit the spread of disease. The prevalence of Smallpox in contiguous Districts gives rise to considerable anxiety as regards the population of Consett, owing to the considerable traffic into the town from infected areas. I have pleasure in testifying here to the excellent public spirit shown by the inhabitants of infected households, proprietors of places of amusement, omnibus companies, managers of various business premises in the District, and the local press, in carrying out any suggestion made by this department with a view to limiting the risk of spread.

DIPHTHERIA ANTI-TOXIN.—Arrangements are made for the supply of Anti-toxin at your Council's cost to Medical Practitioners in the District. This is freely made use of and its timely use undoubtedly has a beneficial effect.

PATHOLOGICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS.—Arrangements between the Durham County Council and the Bacteriological Department of the College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne, are available for the Medical Practitioners of your Area. The majority of the Local Practitioners make use of this, especially in regard to the examination of Sputa for Tubercle Bacilli, and throat swabs for the Diphtheria Bacillus.

No use has been made of the Schick and Dick tests in Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever up to the present time. Artificial methods of immunisation against these diseases have not been used.

Public Health (Smallpox Prevention) Regulations, 1917. Number of primary vaccinations performed by the M.O.H. under the above regulations during 1925, 4. Number of re-vaccinations during 1925, 4.

NON-NOTIFIABLE ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—Influenza has appeared in the early months of the year during the last five years. Though of mild type it appears to be exceedingly infectious and bulks largely in sickness claims for National Health Insurance Benefits and is frequently the forerunner of more serious respiratory disease. Overcrowding and bad ventilation aid in its spread, and its presence, frequently in epidemic form, deserves the consideration of all concerned in Public Health Work.

10 deaths were certified as due to Influenza during 1925, and during the last four years 44 deaths have been so certified in this District.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISINFECTION, ETC.—In the case of Smallpox, the clothing and bedding of the infected person are removed to the Smallpox Hospital and treated by the steam disinfectors available there. The house is disinfected by the Sanitary Inspector by Formalin spray or Sulphur Dioxide.

In the case of other Infectious Diseases the whole of the disinfection necessary is performed on the premises by the Sanitary Inspector, who also gives instruction as to the disposal of infected articles, etc.

TUBERCULOSIS.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1925.

Age Periods.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
10	2	1	3	...	1	1	...	...
15	...	1	1	...	...	1	...	...
20	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
25	2	1	1	...	...	1	...	...
35	2	3	...	...	...	...	...	...
45	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
55	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
65	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	7	10	5	3	1	3	...	...

Infectious Diseases notified during the last five years.

DISEASE.	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925
Small Pox	0	0	0	0	9
Diphtheria	25	23	22	24	38
Scarlet Fever	22	17	16	29	53
Erysipelas	5	3	5	0	5
Acute Pneumonia	0	0	0	0	6
Ophthalmia	2	4	1	1	1
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0	1	1
Chicken Pox (not notifi- able until 1925)	0	0	0	0	40

HOUSING STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total (including numbers given separately under (b) 211

(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :

(i) By the Local Authority ... 146

(ii) By other bodies or persons ... 65

1. *Unfit dwelling-houses.*

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected
for housing defects (under Public
Health or Housing Acts) ... 188

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were
inspected and recorded under the
Housing (Inspection of District) Regu-
lations, 1910, or the Housing Consoli-
dated Regulations, 1925 ... 84

(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be
in a state so dangerous or injurious to
health as to be unfit for human
habitation ... 3

(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of
those referred to under the preceding
sub-head) found not to be in all
respects reasonably fit for human
habitation ... 28

2. *Remedy of defects without Service of formal Notices.*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in con-
sequence of informal action by the Local Authority
or their Officers ... 24

3. *Action under Statutory Powers.*

A.—Proceedings under section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	...	...	nil
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :				
(a) By owners	...	...	...	nil
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	...			nil
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	...			nil

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied				2
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :				
(a) By owners	...	...	...	nil
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	...			2

C.—Proceedings under sections 11, 14, and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	...	...	...	1
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...	...	1
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	...	...	...	nil
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	...	...	nil
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	By arrangement	97	

